

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO ASSEMBLY, No. 5445

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 18, 2019

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5445.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill requires the Attorney General to maintain a program to monitor drug activity in this State and surrounding regions. The program is to provide for multi-jurisdictional sharing of drug incident information among law enforcement agencies. Information related to drug seizures, overdoses, criminal behavior, and health care-related services is to be collected and analyzed to assist in facilitating the development of enhanced policies and practices to prevent drug abuse and misuse and to mitigate the harmful drugs inflict on communities.

The program is to monitor and analyze trends related to the presence and content of fentanyl in illegal substances seized by law enforcement throughout the State. To identify these trends, the Attorney General is to require controlled dangerous substances seized by law enforcement officers in the State to be tested for the presence of fentanyl in accordance with protocols established by the Division of State Police.

The substances are to be tested in accordance with protocols established by the Division of State Police to determine whether fentanyl or other potentially lethal substances are present in the seized substance. The testing is to be performed using appropriate forensic laboratory analysis techniques. Available information related to the presence and content of fentanyl in the substance is to be reported to the Attorney General in a timely manner.

The Attorney General is to compile this information into a database that is accessible to all law enforcement agencies throughout the State. The information is to be continuously updated to reflect the most current information available.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 3909, which also was amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

(1) require the State Police to maintain, rather than establish, the program;

(2) specifically require the program to monitor drug activity in this State and surrounding regions; provide for multi-jurisdictional sharing of drug incident information among law enforcement agencies; collect and analyze information related to drug seizures, overdoses, criminal behavior, and health care-related services to assisting in facilitating the development of enhanced policies and practices to prevent drug abuse and misuse and to mitigate the harm drugs inflict on communities;

(3) require seized substances to be tested in accordance with protocols established by the Division of State Police to determine whether fentanyl or other potentially lethal substances are present;

(4) require testing to be performed using forensic laboratory analysis techniques determined by the State Police; and

(5) make the effective date immediate